United Nations A/51/PV.88

General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

Official Records

88th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 17 December 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 16

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Letter from the President of the Security Council to the President of the General Assembly (A/51/732)

Draft resolutions (A/51/L.66 and A/51/L.67)

The President: I call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to begin my statement by expressing my deep sense of gratitude and appreciation. I convey a personal greeting to all States Members of this Organization, a special greeting and acknowledgement to all the Heads of State or Government who have honoured me with their support and assistance, and my sincere gratitude to Their Excellencies the Ministers, Permanent Representatives and members of delegations for their support and help. I am grateful for the valuable help provided by my aides, who have assisted me in discharging my functions over the past years. I should like also to acknowledge everyone who has helped to maintain the credibility of the United Nations and the independence of its soul.

(*spoke in English*)

Five years ago, responsibility for the Office of Secretary-General was placed in my hands. I am grateful to have had the privilege of serving the peoples of the United Nations during this time. Today I am proud of the way the United Nations has responded to the challenges of these difficult years.

I have had the difficult task of guiding the United Nations during the post-cold-war period. The next century has already begun. Great transformations do not wait for the calendar. The past five-year period opened with optimism and enthusiasm. Member States called on the United Nations to take action, on an unprecedented scale, for peace, development, democratization and reform.

My first act for peace as Secretary-General was to sign at Chapultepec on 16 January 1992 the Agreement on peace for El Salvador, a great achievement by my distinguished predecessor, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar.

The first-ever Summit Meeting of the Security Council took place on 31 January 1992.

My report issued in May 1992, "An Agenda for Peace", launched an international debate on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and the new concept of post-conflict peace-building.

From El Salvador to Cambodia to Angola and Mozambique, the United Nations adapted United Nations peacekeeping to unprecedented forms of conflict.

96-87118 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Development also was given a new opportunity. The easing of ideological tensions and the expected peace dividend raised hopes for development cooperation. The landmark Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 yielded the first-ever global plan — Agenda 21 — for a new and equitable partnership to achieve sustainable development.

Democratization became a new feature of the work of the United Nations. Member States, new and old, turned to the United Nations for support in democratization. The United Nations quickly developed its capacity to provide electoral assistance.

It was clear to me, as I took up the office of Secretary-General, that the United Nations would have to undergo comprehensive change. I simplified Secretariat structures and began a process of managerial reform. This, in turn, stimulated more demand for reform.

Throughout the period leading up to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, reform was the issue of the day. In Governments, universities and foundations drew up proposals for restructuring and reorganizing.

But the middle years of this half-decade were deeply troubled. Disillusion set in. Where peacekeepers were asked to deal with warfare, serious setbacks occurred. The first came in Somalia, and it weakened the will of the world community to act against genocide in Rwanda. In Bosnia, too, hard choices were avoided. The concept of peacekeeping was turned on its head and worsened by the serious gap between mandates and resources. The volume of assistance to developing countries was not only failing to grow, it was, in fact, declining. Resources for long-term development were being diverted to emergency efforts. Africa was hit hardest.

Despite high hopes for democratization, a counter-trend emerged. Atrocities in violation of human rights reached unprecedented levels. The horror of ethnic cleansing emerged. In some countries, democratization proved more difficult than expected, creating political instability, social disarray and economic disappointment. Democratization in some cases slowed, or was even eroded.

And it emerged that the conditions for major reform of the United Nations did not yet exist. The decisions required far exceeded the authority of any Secretary-General. Extensive reform of the United Nations can emerge only from a consensus among Member States on the goals of reform. Until such a consensus exists, and until the political will emerges to take hard decisions and to reform intergovernmental machinery along with Secretariat structures, major institutional reform will be very difficult. And throughout this time of disillusion, the Organization's financial crisis continued to pose a serious obstacle to reform.

The United Nations is emerging from the mood of disillusion. The fiftieth anniversary brought an impressive recommitment by Member States to their world Organization. A new sense of maturity seems possible. We have begun to restore the logic of United Nations peacekeeping and to clarify our approach to the range of instruments contained in the Charter. The division of labour between the United Nations and regional organizations continues to improve.

As I described to the Lyon Summit of the Group of Seven last June, the United Nations is now working closely with the Bretton Woods institutions on development policy and on projects in the field. The flagship of this effort is the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, which I inaugurated earlier this year. And a new global policy consensus has begun to take shape. The Rio Conference on Environment and Development, the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, the Yokohama Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, the Naples Conference on Transnational Crime, the Barbados Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, the Beijing Conference on Women; the Istanbul Conference on Human Settlements and the ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD IX), on globalization and liberalization in South Africa — all have been dedicated to the betterment of the individual human person.

Taken together, this series of conferences has created an entirely new dimension of international cooperation. It has set the stage for restoring development and international economic cooperation to the place it should occupy on the agenda of the United Nations, as a major objective of the Organization in its own right and as a precondition for lasting peace and progress. This is the Charter's conception. This is the conception that the Group of 77 has struggled long and hard to defend. And this should be a key objective of further reform of the Organization in the economic and social area.

For democratization, a more comprehensive and effective United Nations approach is taking shape.

Beyond help in holding free and fair elections, the United Nations today offers a range of forms of assistance, from support for a culture of democratization to institution-building. To succeed over time, democratization within a nation must be supported by a process of democratization among nations. The democratization of the international system is one of the greatest tasks ahead.

The past few years have brought a new and wide recognition that reform is well under way. The path forward can now be seen. Roles and responsibilities are more clearly understood. Key issues of intergovernmental reform relating to the Security Council, assessments and peacekeeping debts are seen to be linked. Proposals are being put forward by Member States for the settlement of arrears.

Most importantly, there is a new recognition that reform is not an end in itself. Reform which seeks to turn the United Nations away from its fundamental responsibilities under the Charter can legitimately be opposed. The test of true reform will be whether it will improve the capacity of the United Nations to meet those responsibilities and to advance the common objectives of the peoples of the United Nations and its Member States.

The downward trend has been broken. What is emerging is a United Nations that is more mature in outlook and stronger in achievement; a United Nations aware not only of its potentialities, but also of its limits. Enthusiasm, disillusion and realism: This has been the history of the United Nations over the past five years.

Now, let us look to the future. Some old problems appear to be solved. But new problems and old problems in new forms have emerged. For some, the world seems more secure. But for many others, devastation, death and despair have become more common. For some, economic progress races forward. But for vast numbers of others, stark poverty crushes hope in every dimension of personal and community life.

What use the world makes of the United Nations in the next few years can affect the course of world affairs for generations to come.

Most immediately, the financial crisis continues. Just as my predecessor said to this Assembly in his last address, I too must state that I have been unable to resolve the financial crisis. This is a threat to the future of the United Nations that began over a decade ago. We know what is causing it, and we know what is needed to end it. It is not the result of mismanagement. It is the refusal to fulfil a treaty obligation.

Now that a new Secretary-General is being appointed, all arrears should be paid at once, as has been promised so often in the past few months.

In saying farewell to this great Assembly, I want to stress that nothing is more precious to the United Nations than its reputation. That reputation rests on four pillars: impartiality, equity, efficiency and achievement. A fifth principle is independence. If one word above all is to characterize the role of the Secretary-General, it is independence. The holder of this office must never be seen as acting out of fear or attempting to curry favour with one State or group of States. Should that happen, all prospects for the United Nations would be lost. The Secretary-General's loyalty must be international, and nothing but international. An international civil service must be a real civil service.

Throughout the past five years, the first thing I thought about when I woke up in the morning was my responsibility as Secretary-General to the ideals of the Charter, and the independence and credibility of the Organization.

(spoke in French)

By way of conclusion, my thoughts go to all the men and women of goodwill with whom I have worked over these past years to confront the difficulties that we have all faced together. I have appreciated their competence, their devotion and their self-denial. Sometimes I have also had to pay tribute to their sacrifices. All those men and women who are devoted to the general interests of the international community are the real wealth — the real future — of this world Organization. I assure them today of my highest consideration and gratitude.

In particular, I should like to congratulate the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, who has served this institution for many years with tenacity, competence and great energy. I am convinced that his varied experience will be useful in resolving problems that he will confront and in defending the interests of the Secretariat and of the entire staff of this world Organization.

Finally, I would like to thank the General Assembly for having five years ago to me entrusted this high post

in which I have continued the work that I have been conducting for so long now in the service of peace, development and human rights.

You can count on me to continue to place my energies in the service of the great ideals of the Charter. You can count on me to continue to defend the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General.

The Assembly has before it document A/51/732 containing a letter dated 13 December 1996 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the President of the General Assembly. Members will recall that on that same day I transmitted copies of that letter by fax to all Permanent Missions. In this regard, I call on the President of the Security Council, who will report to the Assembly on the work undertaken by the Council on this matter.

Mr. Fulci (Italy), President of the Security Council: It is an honour and a privilege for me, in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of December, to address the General Assembly in order to convey to it the recommendation of the Security Council for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

At its 3725th meeting, held in private on 13 December 1996, the Security Council adopted by acclamation two resolutions: resolution 1090 (1996), concerning the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General; and resolution 1091 (1996), expressing appreciation to Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

I shall now read out the texts of the two resolutions. Resolution 1090 (1996) reads as follows:

"*The Security Council*,

"*Having considered* the question of the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

"*Recommends* to the General Assembly that Mr. Kofi Annan be appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2001."

Resolution 1091 (1996) reads as follows:

"*The Security Council*,

"*Recognizing* the central role that Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has played in guiding the Organization in the discharge of his responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations,

"*Further recognizing* his sustained efforts towards finding just and lasting solutions to various disputes and conflicts around the globe,

"*Commending* the reforms that he has initiated and the many proposals that he has made on the restructuring and strengthening of the role and functioning of the United Nations system,

"1. *Acknowledges* the contribution of Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali to international peace, security and development, his exceptional efforts to solve international problems in economic, social and cultural fields, as well as his endeavours to meet humanitarian needs and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all;

"2. *Expresses* its deep appreciation to Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his dedication to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter and to the development of friendly relations among nations."

Allow me to add, also on behalf of the members of the Security Council, our warmest wishes to Mr. Kofi Annan and the assurances of our deepest respect for Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Mr. Kofi Annan, whose name is now being submitted to the decision of the General Assembly, is an eminent son of Africa who fully understands the origins and the often devastating effects of the crises to which our world is prey. On many occasions he has shown the ability to find a fair, impartial and effective middle road by which the United Nations can help to ease the tensions at the heart of so many of today's conflicts.

The curriculum vitae of Mr. Kofi Annan is a testimony to more than 30 years of almost uninterrupted dedication to the many-faceted tasks that the United Nations performs. Time and again, the Organization, and Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in particular, have entrusted assignments of grave responsibility and diplomatic delicacy to the capable hands of Kofi Annan. Time and again, Mr. Kofi Annan has not disappointed the

faith in him. We have no doubt that, as Secretary-General, he would once again meet and exceed all our expectations and carry out his duties in the most impeccable, impartial and independent way.

At the same time, allow me to say that we all owe an immense debt of gratitude to Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose vision of the United Nations and message of mutual understanding between diverse peoples and cultures will remain a source of continuous inspiration to our Organization and to all of us.

The high visibility and dignity that he and his wife, Leia, have given to the Organization during the past five years is only one measure of their success in our behalf.

Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali leaves us a legacy that will guide our debates for years, if not for generations, to come. The testimony to his monumental efforts is there for all to see in his outstanding studies, "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development," concerning the two key tasks of the United Nations.

The President: In connection with the recommendation of the Security Council, we are here this afternoon to consider two draft resolutions, A/51/L.66, "Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations," and A/51/L.67, "Tribute to Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali".

Delegations will also recall that earlier in the afternoon heads of delegations had the opportunity to meet with the candidate recommended by the Security Council prior to taking action on agenda item 16.

In terms of action, the Assembly has before it the two draft resolutions, which were made available on the initiative of the Chairman of the Group of African States and which enjoy the support of the other four regional groups.

The General Assembly will now consider the two draft resolutions. The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.66.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.66 by acclamation?

The draft resolution was adopted by acclamation (resolution 51/200).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.67.

May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.67 by acclamation?

The draft resolution was adopted by acclamation (resolution 51/201).

The President: I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the Secretary-General-elect, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, to the platform.

The Chief of Protocol escorted the Secretary-General-designate, Mr. Kofi Annan, to the platform.

The President: We have just taken action to appoint the next Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. We have also placed on record our recognition of the contribution made by Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the work of the United Nations. This is an auspicious moment.

Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali became Secretary-General of the United Nations at a time of unprecedented change and considerable flux in the world. Notwithstanding the challenges, he has served the United Nations with dedication and selfless service and with a resolute sense of purpose. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali will be remembered for his seminal intellectual contributions to our understanding of preventive diplomacy, humanitarian intervention and democratic nation-building and for laying the essential building blocks for the reform and revitalization of the United Nations system. Under his guidance, the United Nations charted a better understanding of the multifaceted implications of our globalizing world through a series of world conferences. His legacy will serve us well in the challenging years ahead.

It is a singular honour for me, the President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, to welcome on behalf of all Member States our Secretary-General-designate, Mr. Kofi Annan. Both he and the incumbent are illustrious sons of Africa. In appointing him to this key post, the General Assembly takes into account his long record of accomplishment and his understanding of the needs of the Organization at this critical juncture. He is well known to all of us. We place our trust in his ability to articulate and defend a vision of the United

Nations that meets the expectations of Member States and the peoples of the world.

It is no easy task. The Charter itself specifies relatively little beyond assigning an administrative and political function to the Secretary-General. For marginal elaboration, paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 11 (I) of 1946 speaks in stilted and sexist terms of

"a man of eminence and high attainment".

The oath of office provides a little more illumination by referring to the Secretary-General's discharging his functions and regulating his conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions from any Government or other authority external to the United Nations.

Given these vague terms, it is left to us Member States and to the incoming Secretary-General to make the most of the United Nations penchant for constructive ambiguity and to trace the parameters of the role more precisely. The debate will not finish. At the end of the day, it is only in the performance of his office in all its aspects that he will be judged.

The agony and the ecstasy of the secretary-generalship include what can and cannot be done in battle against empire-builders and against the vacuous who repose comfortably in the United Nations without a care for multilateral issues. Good leadership and consummate management skills are needed to inspire a dedicated staff to work with unquestioned integrity and creativity. Although many are brilliant, some are creatures of habit and process, suffering apoplexy at each prospect of change. The United Nations should not be donor-driven; we do not covet the Bretton-Woods impersonation award. And although finance and finite resources may be facts of life, the Secretary-General should not have to pose as a mendicant, petitioning Governments and legislatures alike, at the expense of all else.

The secretary-generalship has increasingly become a focal point for preventive diplomacy and a bully pulpit for the articulation of global perspectives. Despite possessing little power in traditional terms, the Secretary-General nevertheless retains the power of persuasion, knowing the message will be heard no matter how unpopular or inconvenient. The General Assembly believes in a Secretary-General with an independent perspective in defence of the Charter. With discretion, authority and responsibility, the Secretary-General must speak up and act for the wider international interest, one that transcends that of any particular country or region and is greater than the sum total of power dictates. Every important action the Secretary-General takes has a legal dimension, and while the success of these actions may not be ensured by legalism, any serious departure from the legal mandate will put the United Nations at risk.

As Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said in 1986,

> "the Secretary-General is the bearer of a sacred trust and the guardian of the principles of the Charter ... [and] ... to understand correctly the role of the Secretary-General is to appreciate the whole mission of the United Nations".

Ultimately it is not important that he be a world leader, so long as he is able to influence the opinions and decisions of world leaders. In bearing this sacred trust, he should defend the marginalized, and not those who create and enforce their marginalization.

Such an office does not undermine the primacy of the intergovernmental process in any way. Let me say that as Member States, we see ourselves as partners and not competitors. Multilateral organizations and multilateralism can and do work when Member States and the Secretariat believe they are on the same team. Mr. Annan is taking office at a time of deep crisis for the United Nations, when its coffers are all but empty. Important States place inordinate and unfair demands on the Organization, while others dwell more on what is wrong rather than on what can be done. Each of us has decisive steps to take to learn from the lessons and the dead-ends of the recent past collectively to define the architecture of the United Nations for the twenty-first century.

Today's appointment of a new Secretary-General is a landmark in the life of the United Nations. The process we have just completed had ingredients that could have made it go away. I believe that wise decisions taken as a result of wise counsel arrested what could have brought impasse and discredit to the United Nations integrity. Many parties, particularly in Africa, took steps to ensure that the office remained with Africa, to the satisfaction of all. Decisions to strengthen the United Nations in future should draw more from democratic well-springs to balance power factors.

The process of succession is about change and about continuity. Although we need to reform the United

Nations and regain confidence in its central authority, we are not forfeiting the past and its achievements. Like a rock climber, the Organization must scale new heights by advancing slowly, sometimes boldly, and, whether deliberately or unconsciously, always keeping three limbs attached to already established territory while probing for a new hold with the fourth. The Member States and the Secretary-General are linked together in advancing and consolidating their hold on the international landscape.

Finally, to paraphrase a Chinese saying, every crisis is an opportunity in disguise. If we can, with wisdom and integrity, take note of the compass of our actions, we may draw benefit in our attempts to steer a course that better serves the needs of humanity. Mr. Secretary-General-designate, we warmly welcome you to this collective endeavour.

I now call upon His Excellency Mr. Daniel Abibi of the Congo, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Abibi (Congo) (*interpretation from French*): As I address the Assembly from this rostrum it is night in Africa, but from Algiers to Cape Town, from Praia to Mombasa, Africans of all generations are passionately following the event for which we are gathered today here at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Indeed, since Friday, the great news has travelled across our deserts, our savannahs and our forests, proclaiming that Africa, after an outstanding five-year mandate carried out by one of its eminent sons, has been entrusted, through the choice of another of its sons, with the responsibility of guiding the destiny of the most prestigious international Organization for five more years, thus leading it across the bridge that is to take it to the twenty-first century.

As was the case five years ago, today is a great day for all the sons of Africa, including those whom the vicissitudes of history have scattered across the continents. Today — 17 December — will most certainly leave an indelible mark on the minds of present and future generations of Africans, thanks to two men.

The first is Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a statesman of international stature whom an esteemed newspaper once described as the perfect example of a late-twentieth-century gentleman. His work at the head of the United Nations Secretariat is a constant source of legitimate pride for his brothers in Africa.

Mr. Secretary-General, great qualities were needed to keep a firm hand on the helm of the enormous ship of the United Nations and to navigate it through the turbulent storms unleashed by the unceasing turmoil of a world in flux. These qualities were needed to guide the ship from one port to another, avoiding the reefs along the way. Your contribution to the consolidation of international peace and security was indeed outstanding, as was your contribution to sustainable human development and to the protection of fundamental human rights. You have achieved inspiring results because of your constant efforts to adapt the Organization to the realities of our times. The high quality of your service in these and many other fields redounds to the honour of your continent. For all this, Africa thanks you.

The adoption by acclamation of the draft resolution appointing another of our brothers, Kofi Annan, to be the next Secretary-General of the United Nations is not only a collective recognition by the States Members of the Organization of Africa's right to hold a second term of office, but also a testimony to the exceptional qualities of a man who has dedicated his entire life to the cause of cooperation and international peace and security. These qualities certainly impressed those who had the difficult task of deciding among the candidates, all of whom were extremely meritorious. And these qualities will help reduce the uncertainty inherent in guiding an Organization such as ours in a world in full flux and beset by increasingly complex challenges.

Africa knows that the United Nations will be in good hands, hands that, throughout these past 30 years, have dealt effectively with the many obstacles in the difficult missions that have been entrusted to Mr. Kofi Annan. The unbounded enthusiasm felt by so many staff members, the many posts of great responsibility within the Organization that he has occupied with such brilliance, the admirable management of sensitive issues such as Kuwait and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the smooth conduct of delicate peacekeeping operations attest to the competence and effectiveness of the man and justify the great hopes his appointment has inspired.

We are particularly proud at this appointment, which was supported by all. Its symbolic value is clear to everyone. This appointment is, in particular, an incentive for the international community not to despair of Africa despite its current problems, because this continent possesses unsuspected resources, both human and material, that are begging to be used. It also represents a vote of confidence in Africa by the international community, as well as an exhortation to Africans to work

harder and to persevere in trying to find solutions to the problems the continent now faces.

The African Group wishes, through me, solemnly to convey its heartfelt and fraternal congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his well-deserved election, which Africa and the international community are celebrating today. We wish him every success in the difficult task entrusted to him. The Group reiterates here its complete willingness to cooperate as well as the abiding support it will give to the initiatives that the new Secretary-General will surely take in the best interests of us all, and in particular of our continent. It is with confidence and serenity that we will witness our brother Kofi Annan take the reins of the Organization on 1 January 1997.

On behalf of the African Group, I should like also to express, here and now, our profound gratitude to all those whose united efforts enabled the international community to accede to Africa's legitimate claim to a second term of office at the head of the United Nations. I thank in particular the President and all the members of the Security Council for all of their efforts in gradually shaping the historic decision that was taken unanimously on Friday, 13 December 1996. I thank also the President of the General Assembly and the regional Groups of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Western Europe for their friendly understanding. And I thank our fellow members in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the Group of 77 for their active solidarity.

In order to meet, as it must, the challenges of today's world, the United Nations needs both human and financial resources. The African Group hopes that the consensus that prevailed in the election of the Secretary-General will also have a beneficial impact on the issue of financial resources, with the spirit thus created giving new momentum to the Organization's activities.

United, guided by the wisdom of its Heads of State — in particular President Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon and current President of the Organization of African Unity — and actively supported by its friends, Africa has succeeded in obtaining the second term of office to which it legitimately aspired. The lessons drawn from this experience will no doubt serve as points of reference to help the continent confront and resolve the many crises that today are sapping its efforts to bring true prosperity to its people.

The President: I call on the representative of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Jargalsaikhany Enkhsaikhan, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): On behalf of the States members of the Asian Group, it is my great honour and pleasure to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan of Ghana on his well-deserved appointment to the high post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Asian countries truly believe that Mr. Kofi Annan, an outstanding African personality, a seasoned diplomat and a skilful negotiator with long years of experience in the international civil service, will competently guide this world Organization into the twenty-first century and towards the full realization of the underlying principles and purposes enshrined in its Charter.

The Asian countries are confident that the Secretary-General-designate will contribute substantially to the further enhancement of the role and prestige of the world Organization through, *inter alia*, continuing the reform, restructuring and strengthening of the United Nations system so that it can better serve as an indispensable mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the promotion of economic and social development and growth.

We welcome the Secretary-General designate most warmly and wish him every success in fulfilling his highly responsible mission at this crucial juncture in international relations as a whole, and in the work of the United Nations in particular. The Asian States pledge their firm support to him in the discharge of his formidable and weighty responsibilities.

While welcoming the Secretary-General designate, the Asian countries would like to pay tribute to the outgoing Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his valuable contribution in guiding the work of the United Nations in the pursuit of its noble aims, finding just solutions to disputes, developing international cooperation in various fields, proposing the concepts of preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building, and for his evolutionary vision of development, which have been duly reflected in the Secretary-General's reports on an Agenda for Peace and on an Agenda for Development. They have stimulated constructive discussion on the strengthening of the activities of the United Nations system in various areas. We are grateful for, and appreciative of, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali's

leadership over the past five years and wish him and his family every success, health and happiness.

The President: I call on the representative of Poland, His Excellency Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): I have the great honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan on the occasion of his appointment as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations — the one who will lead our Organization into the twenty-first century.

The Eastern European States welcome the decision by acclamation of the Security Council to recommend Mr. Kofi Annan for this high post, as well as his appointment today by acclamation by the General Assembly. Both those decisions reflect Mr. Annan's recognized qualifications: his diplomatic skills, profound knowledge of the contemporary world's challenges and proven dedication to the cause of the United Nations. By appointing Mr. Annan as the Organization's new Secretary-General, the Member States have also reconfirmed the importance of Africa and its role in international relations, including within the United Nations system. The members of the Eastern European Group of States fully share this opinion.

I should like to conclude this part of my statement by conveying to the newly appointed Secretary-General the best wishes of Poland and its fellow countries for every success in discharging his important and, undoubtedly, extremely complicated and difficult mandate and by declaring the willingness of the Eastern European States to cooperate with him in all his endeavours.

On this important occasion I should also like to express our deepest appreciation to the outgoing Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for what he has accomplished during his tenure. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali's dedication to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations can hardly be overestimated. During his term of office he has initiated the reforms and made many proposals on the restructuring and strengthening of the role and functioning of the United Nations system.

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has contributed immensely to the cause of peace, security and development in its broadest sense. Speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like once again to thank Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for guiding the Organization's work during this crucial period of the world's modern history.

The President: I call on the representative of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Manuel Tello, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the pleasure of extending to Mr. Kofi Annan the warmest congratulations of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for his well-deserved appointment as Secretary-General of the United Nations for the next five years. It is particularly gratifying for the region in whose name I have the honour to speak to see once again a worthy son of Africa occupy the high post of Secretary-General. The recommendation of the Security Council and its confirmation by this General Assembly, both adopted by acclamation, is a well-deserved tribute to his personal and professional qualities, which, for a substantial part of his life, have been dedicated to the service of the United Nations.

Throughout the years during which we have had the privilege of observing his work as an international civil servant, we have witnessed his unshakeable commitment to the aspirations of peace and harmony that give life to our Organization. We have admired Mr. Kofi Annan as a person of character who knows how to blend firmness with conciliation and who consistently endeavours to resolve difficulties and differences through dialogue and negotiation. Those virtues, together with his experience as an administrator, will doubtless guarantee the success of his work at the head of the Secretariat.

On the international stage, we continue to see upheaval, uncertainty and unfulfilled hopes. Humankind is facing problems that originated in past conflicts and others that are arising out of new disputes. In his work at the head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Annan worked tirelessly to guide the conduct of the United Nations in the search for solutions to disputes that threatened international peace and security. We are certain that, as a national of a developing country, he will display equal vigour in working to reduce the gap that, unfairly, still separates rich and poor.

The activity of the United Nations in Latin America and the Caribbean is broad and diverse. The Organization has played a decisive role in overcoming long-standing and bitter conflicts. It has been present when circumstances or natural phenomena harmed our

countries. The United Nations has always been very responsive to our requests for cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and institutional fields. In short, the Organization, its goals and its purposes and principles provide an essential framework for the international action of Latin American and Caribbean countries and are common points of reference for dialogue and understanding among ourselves and with all the nations of the world.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are confident that, under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the United Nations will consolidate and expand its presence and work in our region. We are convinced that, ultimately, he will lead the United Nations with accomplishment, skill and a steady hand into the twenty-first century.

I cannot conclude without saying to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali that he can feel proud of his work at the head of our Organization. He was called upon to lead the United Nations at a difficult and complex time of deep transformations in regional and global realities. In those times of turmoil, the Organization had the good fortune to have a statesman of vision and experience. The Secretary-General's dedication and perseverance allowed the United Nations to face with dignity the major challenges of our day. The Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development are concepts that will go down in history beside his name.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have been especially sensitive to his particular interest in and commitment to resolving problems of our region. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali should know that he will always have the heartfelt gratitude of his Latin American and Caribbean friends, who sincerely appreciate and recognize his efforts in and dedication to the best and noblest causes of mankind. He leaves his post with the greatest reward to which a public servant can aspire: the satisfaction of a job well done.

The President: I now call on the representative of Canada, His Excellency Mr. Robert Fowler, who will speak on behalf of the Western European and other States.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) *(interpretation from French):* I have the honour to speak today in my capacity as Chairman for the month of December of the Group of Western European and other States on the occasion of the appointment of the new Secretary-General. It is also a great privilege to have this opportunity to thank Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his outstanding contribution to the Organization over the past five years, as well as to congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan on his appointment to his vitally important post.

Since 1992 Mr. Boutros-Ghali has served the United Nations with extraordinary vision and energy. He took the helm of the Organization at a turbulent time in history and at a turning point in the Organization's evolution. Under difficult circumstances, he sought to find solutions to deep-rooted political, economic and social problems while identifying and responding creatively to new global challenges. He took important steps to restructure and strengthen the United Nations system in order to give us the Organization we need to respond to these new challenges.

His devotion to the purposes of the United Nations Charter throughout this period has been unwavering. He has pointed our Organization in the right direction. This will be his legacy, one for which we offer our deep and unreserved appreciation.

(spoke in English)

We warmly welcome the appointment of Kofi Annan as Secretary-General. The chief executive of this Organization has two main tasks: to work with Member States to fulfil the vision of the Charter and to manage the Organization. At this point in the Organization's history, it has never been more important that the Secretary-General possess the necessary attributes to carry out these tasks. The record of the Secretary-General elect in working closely and productively with Member States and his distinguished career in the United Nations system, throughout which he has won the respect, admiration and abiding loyalty of all who have worked with him, give us every confidence in his capacity to respond fully to these diverse demands.

The next five years will be critical for the Organization. The highest priority will be to redefine and articulate clearly the role the United Nations system ought to play in the twenty-first century. We, the Member States, owe our new Secretary-General all the support we can muster to move the process of renewal creatively forward and to establish with him collective goals, priorities and objectives which meet all of our needs.

As head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Annan has demonstrated his determination and ability to work effectively with Member States and, during a period of enormous change

and often conflicting demands, to find common ground and consensus. At this time of uncertainty for the Organization, we will rely heavily on these skills to support and guide us in restoring our common sense of purpose and commitment to the ideals which guided the framers of the United Nations Charter half a century ago.

It is equally vital that the Organization have the appropriate structure and the necessary resources to carry out its responsibilities. Mr. Annan has worked within the United Nations system for over 30 years. He understands its strengths and he knows its limitations. Through his steadfast leadership he has already won the support of the dedicated people who work for the Organization throughout the world. He is thus uniquely qualified to implement the changes so clearly required to adapt the structure of the Organization to fit the needs of our rapidly changing world.

Mr. Annan's appointment as Secretary-General is also an occasion to reaffirm and strengthen the links between Member States and our Organization. This is an area that needs work if we are to ensure that the United Nations has the continuing moral authority, as well as the financial capacity and the political legitimacy, to fulfil the expectations of the Member States it represents.

Kofi Annan has dedicated his life to pursuing the noble goals of the United Nations and to serving the common interests of humanity. He is now being tasked with the job of retooling the United Nations to meet the challenges of the next century. We offer him our congratulations and our full cooperation, and we look forward to working closely with him as he embarks on this important mission.

The President: I now call on the representative of the United States of America, Her Excellency Mrs. Madeleine Korbel Albright, speaking on behalf of the host country.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): As representative of the United Nations host country, we welcome heartily the election of the seventh Secretary-General.

Mr. Kofi Annan, a distinguished son of Africa, will lead the United Nations across the threshold of a new century. It will be his duty to manage the United Nations so that its resources are put to the best possible use in service to the people we have each been sent here to represent.

Mr. Kofi Annan assumes office at a time of uncertainty about the course this institution will take. There are those who believe the United Nations is too encumbered by habits of the past and too divided by its very nature to achieve a high standard of efficiency and performance. The United States of America is among those having a different, and more optimistic view.

We live in an era in which international cooperation is both more possible and more necessary than ever before. We see institutions of all kinds learning to adjust to the demands imposed by technological, demographic and political change. We have seen the United Nations profit from lessons learned in peacekeeping and begin a process of reform. And we have today elected an individual of high distinction and humanity to serve as Secretary-General for the next five years.

During his career, Kofi Annan has become known to all of us. He has done the difficult jobs well, with fairness, sound judgement and humour and has not shrunk from accountability. He brings to his new office a wealth of experience, a profound knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations and deep dedication to its success. The United States offers its congratulations, and we promise to do our fair share to help.

The first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, called his job the most impossible on earth. I am sure that there are many in this room who would share that view. Mr. Boutros-Ghali has served the international community long and well. He has presided over the United Nations during a time of immense turbulence and transition and will be remembered for his intelligence, dignity and diplomatic skill. I join my colleagues today in expressing gratitude and personal best wishes for the future.

This is a historic day for the United Nations. As it begins its second half century, we must, each of us, think anew about this institution, about our responsibilities and about its possibilities. We must all rededicate ourselves to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

And we must join our efforts with those of our new Secretary-General to make this Organization increasingly effective as a force for peace, a voice for human rights, an instrument of law and, in the words of the Charter, a means for promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The President: I invite the President of the Security Council, former Presidents of the General Assembly, the

former Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Trusteeship Council, the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Main Committees to come to the platform.

The President of the Security Council, former Presidents of the General Assembly, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Trusteeship Council, the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Main Committees took places on the platform.

The President: Your Excellency, I have the honour to inform you officially that the General Assembly has appointed you Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office beginning on 1 January 1997 and ending on 31 December 2001.

I ask Mr. Kofi Annan to repeat after me the oath of Office.

Mr. Annan: I, Kofi Annan, solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as Secretary-General of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Organization.

The Chief of Protocol escorted the President of the Security Council, former Presidents of the General Assembly, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Trusteeship Council, the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the main Committees from the platform.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan to make a statement.

Mr. Annan: Mr. President, respected Secretary-General — or rather, respected Secretaries-General, as I see my old boss, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar is here today — welcome home, Sir — distinguished Ambassadors:

Thank you all for your kind words. I am deeply moved by the good wishes of so accomplished a group of speakers.

Mr. President, I have long admired the imagination and determination you have brought to the difficult challenges of multilateral diplomacy, and I should like to express my appreciation for the leadership you have demonstrated in taking the General Assembly through its demanding schedule to an efficient and productive conclusion.

The Assembly has done me a great honour and at the same time bestowed on me a great responsibility in electing me the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. As a son of Africa and a lifetime international civil servant, I pledge that I will do everything within my power to be worthy of members' trust.

(*spoke in French*)

I wish to pay tribute here to the vision, far-sightedness and energy of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, an exceptional statesman who was called upon to lead the United Nations during the turbulent period of transition from the cold war to the new era opening up before us. We are all aware of the importance of his contribution, the great value of which will go down in history.

In a period of great change the Organization is at a crossroads. For 45 years the rivalry between the super-Powers pervaded its very existence and to a large extent determined its mission. The cold war having come to an end, Member States, while redefining relations between themselves, must now agree on what the United Nations should become in order for them to continue to lend their support.

(*spoke in English*)

The time to choose is now, for this Organization, along with the rest of the world, must change. Let every Member State welcome this change, not resist it. Let us make change our ally, not our enemy; seize it as an opportunity, not a threat; recognize it as a necessity, not an imposition. All of us in this Hall together, with the participation of all nations, large and small, East and West, North and South, can make this Organization leaner, more efficient and more effective, more responsive to the wishes and needs of its Members and more realistic in its goals and commitments. Then and only then will we be serving both this Organization's high purpose and the planet's best interests.

There is no lack of blueprints for a new, post-cold-war United Nations. There is no lack of ideas

or debate. What we need is consensus and commitment. Our task now is to find common ground to shape together the changes that will move this Organization forward.

All the problems, particularly the old ones — peace and security among nations and social justice for their peoples — still confront us. But the old approaches to these problems must be broadened. A new understanding of peace and security must emerge. The world is beginning to recognize the many roots of conflict, the economic base of stability and the grim truth that intolerance, injustice and oppression and their consequences respect no national frontiers. Similarly, we now know more than ever that sustainable economic development is not merely a matter of projects and statistics. It is above all a matter of people, real people, with basic needs: food, clothing, shelter and medical care. Let us ensure that the resources and facilities of the United Nations system are effectively channelled towards those who need them most, those whom globalization has left behind. Let us ensure that the voice of the United Nations in economic matters is heard by those Member States with the greatest capacity to give. These and other challenges are not the Secretary-General's alone, not the Security Council's alone, not the Economic and Social Council's alone. The role of the General Assembly will become still more important as we seek to perfect the triangle of development, freedom and peace.

In this common effort, I shall neither overstep nor minimize my role as head of one of the six principal organs of this Organization. I intend to present my independent views to Member States for their consideration. I intend to offer my services and good offices as mediator and intermediary wherever and whenever I feel it can be helpful. I intend to lead an international civil service that will be honest, efficient, independent and proud of its honourable contribution to the improvement of life on this planet. Finally, I intend to stress not only our legal obligations, not only our fiscal limitations, not only our political and diplomatic considerations, but above all the moral dimension of our work in this Organization.

In that spirit, let us embark on a time of healing: a healing of fractures and frictions between Member States and this Organization, which cannot function without their political and material support, and a healing of wounded morale and ideals within the Secretariat, whose dedicated staff deserve our thanks and encouragement.

To the nations and peoples of the world whose representatives are gathered here today, I say simply this: the United Nations is your instrument for peace and justice. Use it; respect it; defend it. It can be no wiser, no more competent and no more efficient than those Member States that now comprise and guide it. But those of us who serve you here pledge our every effort and all our energy to the causes set forth in the Charter. No nation needs to face or fight alone the threats which this Organization was established to defuse. But we cannot succeed without your political, moral, financial and material support and participation. Applaud us when we prevail; correct us when we fail; but, above all, do not let this indispensable, irreplaceable institution wither, languish or perish as a result of Member States' indifference, inattention or financial starvation.

I accept the high post entrusted to me, humbled by the formidable challenges that lie ahead, but filled with confidence in the nobility of our goals, in the determination of our common spirit and in the success of our common effort. Alone, I can do nothing. Together, we can irreversibly advance the frontiers of peace, dignity and justice for all mankind.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 45 (*continued*)

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/348)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.55)

The President: I should like to point out that a correction should be made to operative paragraph 48 of draft resolution A/51/L.55. The text of operative paragraph 48, as submitted by the sponsors, should read as follows:

> "*Requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development to its fifty-second session."

I trust that the General Assembly will have no objection to now considering draft resolution A/51/L.55 on the understanding that the draft resolution with the corrected text for operative paragraph 48 will be reissued.

I call on the representative of Chile to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.55.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the great pleasure of introducing to the Assembly, on behalf of 60 sponsors, the draft resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, contained in document A/51/L.55. The following sponsor countries are to be added to the list that appears in the document: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Jamaica, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, Slovenia, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

This draft resolution is the result of broad negotiations carried out over recent weeks with a positive spirit of goodwill on the part of all the participants, which made it possible to arrive at this consensus text reflecting the agreement of Member States to underline and reaffirm as a national and international goal the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

In its first part the draft resolution recalls the principles and fundamental objectives of the Social Summit: to promote social progress, give the utmost priority to the needs of people and summon the political will to make ever greater investments in human beings. It also recognizes the following essential bases for social development: democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, responsible governance and the participation of civil society, as well as peace, freedom, stability and national and international security.

Under the heading "National action and international cooperation for social development", the draft resolution highlights the primary responsibility of Governments for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Summit. While recognizing that cooperation and international assistance are fundamental for its full implementation, it makes it clear that it is at the national level where the first foundations for the implementation of the commitments of the Summit must be laid, through the resolute will of our Governments to assign priority to social development. It also reaffirms the need for all Governments and the entire United Nations system to strengthen regional and subregional cooperation for social development and the importance of promoting gender perspective in approaches to social development.

A special section is devoted to mobilization of financial resources for social development, at both the national and international levels. The draft resolution recognizes the need for additional financial resources for the effective implementation of the commitments of the Summit in the developing countries, especially those of Africa and the least developed countries, and the need to provide appropriate technical cooperation and other forms of assistance to countries with transitional economies. It also highlights the need for all countries to elaborate economic policies that promote domestic savings and attract external resources for productive investment, giving priority to basic social services.

It also highlights, among other things, the recent initiatives of the Bretton Woods institutions for debt relief for developing countries, including the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, and the importance of stimulating national development initiatives for social development, including credit for people who live in poverty, especially women. It notes with interest the upcoming summit on microcredit. It recognizes the efforts of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to incorporate social development into their policies and programmes in a variety of ways and more intensively than in the past, as well as the urgent need for the international community to make efforts to reach as soon as possible the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product of developed countries for official development assistance. It also endorses Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/48, on new and innovative ideas to generate new funds. It reaffirms the importance of interested developed and developing country partners agreeing to allocate 20 per cent of official assistance and of national budgets, respectively, for basic social programmes, while noting with appreciation the outcome of the Oslo meeting in April of this year.

The draft resolution contains a special heading, "Involvement of civil society and other actors", in recognition of the role of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of and follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action and their participation in the planning, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of policies at the national level, in the work of the Commission on Social Development and in the implementation of the entire process relating to the Summit.

The role of the United Nations system is broadly considered. The draft resolution highlights the fundamental importance of the reform and revitalization of the Commission for Social Development in the follow-up to and implementation of the Summit. I wish to reiterate most especially — and this is part of the story of the draft resolution — that this draft resolution highlights particularly the primary role of the Commission on Social

Development within the United Nations system at large in the follow-up to and implementation of the commitments of the Social Summit, including in the preparations of the special session of the General Assembly scheduled for the year 2000. The draft resolution is intended to reinforce before the eyes of the world the work of the Commission on Social Development. It also reaffirms and welcomes the actions of the Economic and Social Council to provide general guidance and coordinate the activities of the United Nations in connection with the implementation of the outcome of the Summit in general and especially in activities to eradicate poverty.

The draft resolution makes special reference to activities to promote the objectives of the United Nations Development Programme, the regional commissions and the International Labour Organization. It also highlights the role of the inter-agency working groups to follow up the international conferences, and the work of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to ensure the cooperation of all United Nations bodies in the follow-up to the Summit.

The final section of the draft resolution is prominently and significantly devoted to the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 to carry out a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. It recalls the commitment made by the Heads of State or Government in Copenhagen, as expressed in resolution 50/161, to hold a special session in the year 2000 on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to consider further measures and initiatives.

The draft resolution decides that the preparatory process of that special session will be organized by combining the functions of a preparatory committee of the whole of the General Assembly with the work of the Commission for Social Development, in accordance with its multi-year programme of work. To this end, it decides that a preparatory committee of the General Assembly is to be established next year, that its organizational session will be held in 1998 and that its substantive work will begin in 1999 on the basis of the inputs of the Commission for Social Development and of the Economic and Social Council, also taking into account the contributions of other relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

In particular, as I have already stated, the work of the Commission for Social Development in the years 1999 and 2000 will constitute very special preparations for the special session and for the work of the preparatory committee, in accordance with its programme of work.

As I said when I spoke on this item on 16 October 1996, the special session of the General Assembly set for the year 2000 will be a meeting of historic importance and will provide a good opportunity for the high-level participation of Governments. Also, as stated in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and as the draft resolution recalls, the special session of the General Assembly will also provide an opportunity to take measures for the future — not only to evaluate the past, but also to take initiatives in the social sphere to keep it at the centre of United Nations activity. Hence the desire to start preparations on time, so that we are all informed and can participate in the draft resolution's decision to give the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 a very important political profile.

From this standpoint, the action the Assembly is to take today to prepare appropriately for the special session shows the renewed political commitment of the United Nations to the spirit of Copenhagen by placing people-oriented social development at the heart of the Organization's activities.

Lastly, the draft resolution reaffirms that the follow-up to the Summit will take place on the basis of an integrated approach to social development and within the framework of coordinated follow-up to the major international conferences and that this item will be included in the provisional agenda of the next session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Biggar (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on draft resolution A/51/L.55, on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The following associated countries — Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — align themselves with this statement. Iceland and Liechtenstein also align themselves with this statement.

The European Union participated actively in the very comprehensive consultations on the draft resolution under consideration and will join in its adoption by consensus. We wish to thank our distinguished colleague from Pakistan, Mr. Masood Khan, for his wise and skilful leadership in bringing the negotiations to a consensus conclusion.

Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Operative paragraph 46 of the draft resolution provides for the organization of the preparatory process for the special session of the General Assembly which will be held in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. The European Union attaches considerable importance to the proper and thorough preparation of the special session. We have made clear our view that this preparation should take place in the context of the integrated approach to social development decided upon by the General Assembly last year.

We believe that the Commission for Social Development, as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council with the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the Summit, is the most appropriate forum for undertaking preparations for the special session. In this regard, the enlargement of the Commission's membership from 32 to 46, the adoption of a thematic and focused multi-year work programme to the year 2000 and the decision to annualize its meetings will enable it to fulfil this central role.

The preparatory committee should build on the work done in the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council. The European Union would expect that in 1998 a brief organizational session of the preparatory committee will be held. The preparatory committee proper should begin its substantive work in 1999 with a session of not more than one week's duration, to be held after that year's Commission for Social Development meetings and the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. This will allow it to draw on the inputs from these meetings. The main functions of the preparatory committee will be to assess the status of the preparations for the special session and to provide overall guidance for the process. We look forward to the participation of high-level representatives from the field of social development in the deliberations of both the Commission for Social Development and of the preparatory committee.

We also support the fullest participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process for the special session, and appropriate modalities should be put in place for this purpose.

Mr. Hynes (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): The World Summit for Social Development represented a historic step in the efforts of the international community to come to grips with the issue of social development in today's world. Of course, the Copenhagen Summit produced a wide-ranging Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action. Some provisions have various implications and degrees of relevance for our countries, whose problems and means vary. Like others, Canada had an opportunity to state its particular views and concerns in this regard when the Copenhagen documents were adopted in 1995.

The crucial point, however, is that the Summit successfully forged an international consensus on the nature of the basic challenges of social development: combating poverty, unemployment and marginalization. It also found agreement on the need for determined national and international efforts to address those challenges. My delegation's co-sponsorship of the draft resolution before us reflects Canada's serious commitment to effective United Nations follow-up to that consensus.

(spoke in English)

Inevitably, effective implementation of the outcome of the World Summit must be an ongoing process. With this in mind, the United Nations has assigned an important, continuing role to the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, primarily the Commission for Social Development. It is the responsibility of these bodies, led by the Commission for Social Development and with active contributions from United Nations-system agencies, from experts and from representatives of civil society, to ensure that the future work of the United Nations in this area is pragmatic and result-oriented.

Such leadership and sustained efforts by the Commission for Social Development will be equally crucial in shaping and establishing the basis for the work of the preparatory committee of the whole mandated by the draft resolution. This offers the best guarantee that the review process in the year 2000 will produce conclusions of practical value for future policy and programming in this area. Canada pledges its cooperation to all Members of the United Nations in this process.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Somavía and the delegation of Chile for the effective and dedicated manner in which they have led the Assembly in considering this question. We look forward to continued collaboration with them in pursuing implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit in all relevant forums.

Mrs. Castro de Barish (Costa Rica)(*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, it is my honour to express our satisfaction at the achievement of a consensus text for the draft resolution on the item "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" document A/51/L.55.

We consider this to be a well balanced text that takes into account all the elements necessary for a full and effective implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The Group of 77 and China, which worked together with the other participants in the working group, believes that a good preparatory process for the special session in the year 2000 should provide for a sufficient amount of time and all necessary input both from the Secretariat and from Governments to enable the preparatory Committee to fulfil its important mandate in a satisfactory manner.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.55.

Before taking action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its introduction the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/51/L.55: Guatemala and Uruguay.

Mrs. Limjuco (Philippines): The Philippine delegation would like to be listed as a sponsor of the draft resolution.

Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina): We would like to announce that Bosnia and Herzegovina too would like to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Secretariat will take note of the requests.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.55?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/202).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 45?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 55

Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development

The Acting President: In connection with this agenda item, representatives will recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the fifty-first session.

May I take it that it is the Assembly's wish to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 55?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 56 (continued)

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Draft resolution (A/51/L.62/Rev.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/51/L.62/Rev.1.

Before calling upon representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation)(*interpretation from Russian*): In determining its position on draft resolution A/51/L.62/Rev.1 under agenda item 56, "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", the Russian Federation based itself primarily on the extent to which the language used reflects the present crucial stage in the settlement of the Bosnian situation. The process of implementing the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina is now entering a decisive phase. The important thing is to reinforce the progress already made and to set future priorities for further implementation.

Guided by those considerations, the Security Council last week unanimously adopted to resolution 1088 (1996), which gives fresh impetus to a further stage in the international community's implementation of the peace process. Unfortunately, we note that, unlike the clear formulations to be found in Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), the draft resolution now before the Assembly contains language that is imprecise and unclear.

Some of the provisions it contains are too detailed, for example the language used with regard to the International Tribunal, while other aspects of the situation are not even mentioned. There are some provisions of which the point is unclear to us, as, for example, the welcoming of the foundation on 30 October 1996 of the Coalition for Return. The language relating to the return of refugees refers only to their voluntary return to their homes of origin, but not to resettlement to places of their own choosing.

On the whole, we believe that, given that the Security Council is actively seized of this matter, there is no need for the General Assembly to adopt a draft resolution on this item; consideration of the item could easily have been deferred to the fifty-second session. That is why, from the very outset, we did not support General Assembly action on this draft resolution.

At the same time, we cannot fail to note that ultimately the sponsors of the draft made substantial changes to the previous language which was one-sided and unacceptable. The Russian delegation would therefore be prepared to abstain in the vote on this draft resolution.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.62/Rev.1.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/51/L.62/Rev.1: Guyana, Liechtenstein and the Netherlands.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Belarus, Russian Federation.

The draft resolution was adopted by 149 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions (resolution 51/203).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Azerbaijan and Cape Verde informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 56.

Agenda item 163

Observer status for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the General Assembly

Draft resolution A/51/L.56

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.56.

Mr. Henze (Germany): I have the honour to introduce today a draft resolution entitled "Observer Status for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the General Assembly", as contained in document A/51/L.56. In addition to the sponsors listed in that document, the draft resolution is sponsored also by the following countries: Algeria, Comoros, Kuwait, Malaysia, Monaco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Poland, Suriname, Tunisia, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The draft resolution responds to a decision taken at the fifth session of the meeting of States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to seek observer status for the Tribunal and to a related decision taken by the Tribunal last October.

As members are aware, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is an institution established for the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, consistent with Article 2, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with part XV and annex VI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Its activities are closely related to those of the United Nations in the field of the law of the sea and ocean affairs, for which the Secretariat of the United Nations serves as the secretariat to the States parties to the Convention.

The Tribunal, as the central institution created under the Convention for the peaceful settlement of disputes, needs to be aware of all developments relating to the oceans and to the general principles for the peaceful settlement of disputes reflected in the work of the General Assembly. At the same time, the work of the Tribunal will contribute to the development of the law of the sea and to the general principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes; the General Assembly may wish to take such developments into account in its own work. Observer status for the Tribunal in the Assembly will greatly enhance this extremely useful flow of information, as it does for the International Court of Arbitration. The International Court of Justice of Justice at The Hague, on the other hand, is a United Nations organ and thus benefits automatically from the advantages which the Tribunal for the Law of the Sea should obtain through its observer status.

I am encouraged by the broad support that the Tribunal's request for observer status in the General Assembly has received from delegations. Observer status is essential for the effective work of the Tribunal, the central institution created under the Convention for the peaceful settlement of disputes. I therefore request the Assembly to give this draft resolution favourable consideration.

Mr. Sylvester (Belize): Belize takes great pride in being numbered among the more than 60 delegations supporting the request being considered: to grant observer status in the General Assembly to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

The Tribunal's decision to seek observer status is consistent with the decision taken at the fifth meeting of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, held in New York last summer. The Tribunal has been invested with a legal personality. It is an institution established for the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and part XV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It has competence over matters governed by the Convention which relate to the maritime areas that encompass some 70 per cent of our planet.

The Tribunal's jurisdiction covers such subjects as delimitation, conservation of the marine environment, mining of the seabed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, and fisheries. The activities of this new institution may therefore be seen as complementing efforts of the United Nations in the area of the law of the sea and ocean affairs. Mutual benefit can be derived from its access to the General Assembly's deliberations on such issues. The United Nations is undoubtedly a marketplace of ideas, resources and trends. Since the Tribunal should adjudicate many of the disputes relating to the Earth's seas and oceans, it needs exposure to this forum.

As a judicial organ, the Tribunal performs important functions in relation to the settlement of disputes and the preservation of peace and related concerns. It therefore needs easy access to information, documentation and discussion on issues being considered in such bodies as the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, and related committees and working groups. Naturally, the work of the Sixth Committee and various other legal bodies are of interest to the Tribunal.

As an entity with a full-scale administrative structure, the Tribunal will undoubtedly seek to interface with the administrative machinery of the United Nations. It will therefore wish to observe closely the workings of the Fifth Committee and related bodies.

The interrelated nature of the work of the Tribunal and that of the United Nations requires the establishment

of a formal link. During this crucial start-up period, the full cooperation and support of the United Nations for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is vital. We therefore request that the draft resolution before us be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): The delegation of Ghana is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/51/L.56, which invites the Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to participate as an observer in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly.

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is a key component of the new regime for the oceans established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. As a forum for judicial settlement it will be a vital organ for the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter as well as part XV of the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Tribunal is specifically mandated to deal, *inter alia*, with many scientific and technology-related issues, including pollution, the environment, fisheries, deep-seabed mining, and delimitation. The international community's expectations of the Tribunal, as it readies itself to discharge its functions, make it necessary and urgent that the Tribunal be granted observer status in the General Assembly. It is our opinion that such status will expose the Tribunal to the resources, ideas and trends of the United Nations, and thereby enhance the Tribunal's effectiveness at all times.

Furthermore, the activities of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea are complementary to those of the United Nations in several spheres, particularly as the Secretary-General functions also as the focal point for the Convention and in the process plays the role of an agency of cooperation, collation and coordination. To enhance the continuous growth and consolidation of the interrelated activities which these two bodies undertake, it is necessary that the Tribunal be accorded observer status in the General Assembly. This would also be consistent with the previous granting of similar status to the Permanent Court of Arbitration and to the International Seabed Authority.

For all these reasons, Ghana supports the draft resolution which would grant the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea observer status in the General Assembly. We urge that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): Italy wishes to express its full support for the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.56, on observer status in the General Assembly to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. My country is a sponsor of this draft resolution.

The establishment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, represents an event of the utmost importance in ensuring the uniform interpretation of the rules of international law in this area, and, more generally, for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States. In this regard, the Tribunal's participation in the General Assembly as an observer is an essential tool for the Tribunal's effective performance of the functions conferred upon it.

Following the inauguration of the Tribunal last October, let me, on behalf of Italy, also convey to all the members and staff of the Tribunal best wishes for good and productive work. All members of the Tribunal have outstanding professional and personal qualifications for their jobs, and we are particularly proud of having an Italian scholar, Professor Tullio Treves, as a judge, and to see one of the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, Ambassador Edward Laing of Belize, sitting also as a member of the Tribunal. We are sure that, thanks to the contributions of so many excellent personalities, the Tribunal will meet all our expectations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/51/L.56.

I shall now call on the representative of Turkey for an explanation of vote before action is taken on the draft resolution. May I remind her that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Baykal (Turkey): Turkey has no objection to the draft resolution before us, entitled "Observer status for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the General Assembly". However, as the Tribunal is an institution established in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Turkey would like, for the record, to reiterate its position regarding the Convention.

Turkey supports the purpose of the Convention, which is to establish a regime of the seas based on the principle of equity that can be acceptable to all States.

However, the Convention does not make adequate provision for special geographical situations and, as a consequence, it is not able to establish an acceptable balance between conflicting interests. Furthermore, the Convention makes no provision for registering reservations on specific clauses. Although we agree with the general content and most of the provisions of the Convention, we are unable to become a party to it owing to these serious shortcomings. Thus, our acceptance of draft resolution A/51/L.56 does not in any way change our position with regard to the Convention.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.56.

I should like to inform the Assembly that, since its introduction, Benin has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/51/L.56.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.56?

Draft resolution A/51/L.56 was adopted (resolution 51/204).

The Acting President: In accordance with the resolution just adopted, I now call on Mr. Gritakumar Chitty, Registrar of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

Mr. Chitty (International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea): On behalf of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, I acknowledge with appreciation the decision of the General Assembly to grant observer status to the Tribunal. I wish to express the gratitude of the President of the Tribunal, Mr. Thomas Mensah, and the other Judges of the Tribunal, and my own gratitude as Registrar, for the initiative taken by Germany, and for the support of other States in having the item entitled "Observer status for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the General Assembly", included in the agenda of the fifty-first session. I also wish to thank the representatives of the 59 States that originally sponsored the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.56, which has just been adopted by the Assembly, and those that subsequently joined in sponsoring it. The resolution invites the Tribunal to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.

One of the primary purposes of the United Nations under the Charter is to maintain international peace and security. The legal regime established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, under which the Tribunal was established, builds upon the foundations laid down in the United Nations Charter. The Tribunal will have an important role in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means consistent with Article 2, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and in accordance with Part XV of the Convention. It serves to encourage States parties, in conjunction with their obligations under Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Charter, to fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed under the Convention and under other international agreements.

The jurisdiction of the Tribunal, as set out in article 21 of its Statute, contained in Annex VI to the Convention, comprises all disputes and all applications submitted to it in accordance with the Convention, and all matters specifically provided for in any other agreement that confers jurisdiction on the Tribunal. The Tribunal is an institution of the Convention and an instrument created by it, specially instituted for the peaceful resolution of conflicts over the interpretation or application of the new international law of the sea. It seeks to preserve and secure a Convention so widely acceptable that it will endure for generations to come.

The Tribunal has an interest in the law of the sea and ocean affairs, including fisheries and navigation, the global environment, sustainable development, questions relating to administration, and other related matters considered by the General Assembly. The granting of observer status is therefore of the utmost importance, as it will enable the Tribunal to participate as an observer in the deliberations of the Assembly with respect to topics of interest to the Tribunal.

The problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole, as the Convention states in its preamble. The activities of the Tribunal are complementary in many areas to those of the United Nations, especially in the field of the law of the sea and ocean affairs, for which the Secretary-General has broad responsibilities. The International Seabed Authority is the other organization established by the Convention. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf is due to be established shortly. The functions of the Secretary-General under the Convention include the important one of reporting on developments relating to the law of the sea. He does so annually to the General Assembly.

Furthermore, the Tribunal, created under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the peaceful settlement of disputes, needs to be aware of all developments concerning the oceans and of all general principles and developments relating to peaceful settlements in accordance with the Charter. Therefore, the decision of the Assembly to grant observer status will not only serve to establish and consolidate links between the Tribunal and the United Nations, but will also assist both the General Assembly and the Tribunal in carrying out their work. It is envisaged that these links will shortly find expression and elaboration in a relationship agreement between the two organizations.

Once again, on behalf of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, I wish to express appreciation for the decision of the General Assembly to grant observer status to the Tribunal, and I look forward to a relationship based on cooperation and understanding between the Tribunal and the United Nations. I take this opportunity to express appreciation to the Secretary-General, to the Legal Counsel and to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs, for facilitating and supporting the establishment of the Tribunal leading up to its ceremonial inaugural session on 18 October 1996 in Hamburg, Germany, and even thereafter.

Consistent with resolution 51/34, adopted on 9 December 1996 under the item "Law of the Sea", it is anticipated that close collaborated will continue between the institutions of the Convention: the United Nations, with its Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea serving as the secretariat of the Convention, the International Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

I take this opportunity also to express to the Secretary-General-elect, Mr. Kofi Annan of Ghana, the warmest congratulations of the President of the Tribunal, Mr. Thomas Mensah, and the Judges of the Tribunal, and my own congratulations, on his elevation to the office of Secretary-General of the United Nations, an office whose incumbency he will adorn.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 163?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 164

Proclamation of 21 November as World Television Day

Draft resolution A/51/L.60

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Italy to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.60.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.60 on agenda item 164, entitled "Proclamation of 21 November as World Television Day". This draft resolution has been sponsored by a very large number of countries. In addition to the 128 sponsors already appearing in document A/51/L.60, the draft resolution has also been sponsored by Armenia, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, China, Croatia, Dominica, Ghana, Maldives, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Tajikistan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe, thus bringing the total number of sponsors to 147. I would like to express Italy's deep appreciation to all these delegations for their valuable support.

Three weeks ago, on 21 and 22 November, the first World Television Forum was held at the United Nations, jointly organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information, Italian State Television and the Italian Government, and financed entirely by Italy. For the first time in the life of this Organization, leading media personalities of both the public and the private sectors met under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss the growing significance of television in today's changing world and to consider how they might enhance their future cooperation. In the Final Declaration of the World Television Forum, the event was regarded as historic. And it was indeed a historic gathering, since it was attended by more than 140 representatives of broadcasters from more than 50 nations.

We think that by organizing and financing the meeting, Italy has made a significant contribution to establishing a very useful link between the United Nations system and broadcasters all over the world. Now it is important not to lose momentum and to build on this achievement.

The participants in the Forum supported the idea of establishing an annual World Television Day, to be celebrated each 21 November, which would be marked by global exchanges of television programmes focusing particularly on such issues as peace and security,

economic and social development and the enhancement of cultural exchange. This special day would be closely linked to the organization of future sessions of the World Television Forum, since the latter would be held simultaneously with the Television Day, thereby greatly enhancing the general visibility of the Forum. Let me indicate here that Italy and other countries are considering organizing a second Forum of the same kind as early as next fall.

Responding to this appeal, Italy decided to submit a draft resolution. In our view, the holding of the Forum and the proclamation of 21 November as world Television Day are the first steps towards the establishment of a permanent forum of discussion, under the auspices of the United Nations, on issues related to the growing importance of television on the eve of a new century. Let me specify here that the word television, in this very broad context, is a reference not merely to television today, but rather to what its role will be in the future as a powerful instrument of information, individual and global communication, and cultural and social exchange, for all countries and all individuals in the world.

The draft resolution on which the Assembly is about to take action has received strong and wide support from Member States. As I have already indicated, it has been sponsored by 147 countries, a number which represents more than three-quarters of the entire membership. This is a clear demonstration of the importance that Member States attach to this initiative, as well as of the interest the World Television Forum has raised among them.

For all those reasons, we hope that the draft resolution can be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Legal (France) *(interpretation from French)*: The delegation of France wishes to join the delegation of Italy in recommending to members the adoption of draft resolution A/51/L.60.

The decision that one day of the year should be World Television Day would mark the anniversary of the important Forum which was held on 21 and 22 November on the initiative of the Government of Italy. Some might think that this is just one more commemorative day amongst others; some might think there are too many of them. But that is not the view of my delegation.

The initiative taken on 21 and 22 November opens a door for cooperation which should be explored. It is important to continue the exchanges that were begun on 21 and 22 November. It is important to do so for two reasons: first, for the United Nations, because the Organizations needs to be better known through the exceptional medium of television, and secondly for world television itself. It is useful to open up to more multilateral questions and to cooperate on the basis of equality rejecting unilateral domination and unbalanced messages.

Cooperation between television and the United Nations should serve both television and the United Nations. This is why I keenly endorse the statement just made by the representative of Italy and why I hope that the text can be adopted.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/51/L.60. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Chambers (United States of America): My delegation will abstain on draft resolution A/51/L.60 proclaiming 21 November as World Television Day. This proclamation is a doubtful expenditure of time and energy at best. Other General Assembly resolutions already address the substantive issues surrounding the communication of United Nations activities and there is certainly no shortage of mandates detailing how and what information on programmes and policies should be disseminated.

And surely, if we are to recognize the global importance of television, how can we ignore the medium's *raison d'etre* and central value: facilitating the free and uncensored flow of information and ideas to ordinary people around the world. A commemorative day that does not have this concept as an organizing principle runs the risk of providing legitimacy for those who would misuse television as a tool of repression and control.

Finally, I would also note that this draft resolution has not been considered according to usual procedure, a process that would have allowed a full discussion and airing of these types of issues and that most likely would have led to the realization that this draft resolution is unneeded and unnecessary.

I urge others to join us in showing their non-support for this draft resolution.

Mr. Zaagman (Netherlands): Shortly we will be voting on draft resolution A/51/L.60, by which the General Assembly would proclaim 21 November as World Television Day, commemorating the date on which the first World Television Forum was held.

While the Netherlands considered the Forum to have been an interesting and indeed useful meeting, we are of the opinion that the draft resolution before us today is not a good proposition. We have the following reasons for this view.

While over the past few years delegations have been trying to rationalize the proceedings of the United Nations and do away with less important resolutions, the submission of the present draft resolution goes in exactly the opposite direction. The draft resolution does not address an issue which is important enough to be discussed by the General Assembly. At a time when the United Nations is debating issues like Bosnia and Zaire, it adds another so-called special day to a seemingly endless list of days which are mostly of questionable use.

Furthermore, operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution could be considered as requesting Member Governments to influence the contents of television programmes. This is against our basic values and convictions. Governments should not have that right.

For these reasons, the Netherlands will not support the present draft resolution and will abstain in the vote.

Mr. Henze (Germany): We welcomed the World Television Forum, which was attended, along with other people, by high-level representatives of German television. It was a useful event. However, we have problems with the draft resolution before us for three reasons.

First, there are already three United Nations days encompassing similar subjects: World Press Freedom Day; World Telecommunication Day; and World Development Information Day. To add another day does not make much sense. Indeed, as has rightly been pointed out by the representative of the United States and the Netherlands, it runs counter to the efforts of a great majority of Member States to streamline the agenda of the General Assembly and reduce the number of items.

Secondly, as we all know, television is only one means of information and an information medium to which a considerable majority of the world population has no access: the poor majority of the world population, whose needs and problems Ambassador Somavía of Chile so eloquently described and deplored when he introduced draft resolution A/51/L.55 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. That vast majority could easily look at World Television Day as a rich man's day. They do not have access to television. There are more important information media and here I would mention radio in particular. We think it is more important to enhance the role of those media than that of television.

Thirdly, operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, as has been pointed out by the representative of the Netherlands, is ambiguous at the least and gives rise to concern that it could have negative implications for freedom of the press. Freedom of the press is a fundamental principle of the German Constitution. We cannot accept any language which would cast a shadow of doubt on that principle.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.60.

A recorded vote has been requested.

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, France, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein,

Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Haiti, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Draft resolution A/51/L.60 was adopted by 141 votes to none, with 11 abstentions (resolution 51/205).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Djibouti and Haiti informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: I shall now call on the representative of Cuba, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Cueto Milián (Cuba)(*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba voted in favour of the draft resolution introduced by the delegation of Italy since it considers that there is true merit in its underlying spirit. In the view of the delegation of Cuba, the proclamation of World Television Day could and should serve, above all, to promote relations of friendship, respect and cooperation among all States and nations of the world and to promote the economic and social development of peoples. Our delegation is sympathetic with the aim of the Italian proposal. However, we believe that the substance of the draft resolution does not reflect certain principles of information and of freedom of press and expression.

We think that the proclamation of World Television Day should also serve as a point of departure and a time of reflection, above all, on those peoples and nations that do not even know what television is, on those peoples that do not have access to a well-balanced flow of information and on those peoples subjected to television signals intended to undermine their territorial integrity, sovereignty and freely chosen political and social system, which are broadcast in violation of the most basic norms of international telecommunications treaties.

Thus, the delegation of Cuba reiterates that its vote in favour of the draft resolution introduced by Italy implies, above all, the confidence that World Television Day will stimulate reflection on and promotion of the fact that television should always be to the benefit of the oppressed and the needy, and not the wealthy and powerful nations.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 164?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Sixth Committee

Agenda item 144

Convention on the law of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/51/624)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/733)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 12 of its report.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/51/733.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/206).

The Acting President: I shall now call on the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Chambers (United States of America): The United States has joined the consensus on agenda item 144 and will also join the consensus on items 147, 150 and 151 and any programme budget implications associated with these items with the understanding that the Fifth Committee will reduce its reservation of 15 weeks of meetings in 1997 and that these items' conference-services requirements will be met from within the 15 weeks reserved for the Fifth Committee. The relinquished meeting time will be reallocated to accommodate conference-service requirements of these items so that they can be absorbed within the 1996-1997 biennium budget of $2.608 billion. The United States will actively seek confirmation in the Fifth Committee of this understanding and the absorption of all potential budgetary add-ons within the 1996-1997 biennium budget of $2.608 billion.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 144.

It was so decided.

Agenda item 147

Establishment of an international criminal court

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/51/627)

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences A/51/721)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/733)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

I should like to draw the attention of members to a letter dated 9 December 1996 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences, issued as document A/51/721, concerning the draft resolution.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/51/733.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/207).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 147?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 150

Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/51/630)
Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/733)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take decisions on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 14 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted draft Resolution I, entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions", without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 51/208).

The Acting President: Draft Resolution II is entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization".

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution II is contained in document A/51/733.

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 51/209).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 150?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 151

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/51/631)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/733)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now consider the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Hamdan (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Lebanon's position on this subject is based on two inalterable principles. First, terrorism is a serious scourge that threatens democracy and should therefore be fought just as organized crime is fought. Lebanon is opposed to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Secondly, the very concept of terrorism must be correctly defined. A distinction must be made between terrorist acts, strictly speaking, and struggles for the liberation of an occupied territory or resistance against armies of occupation. A distinction must be made between violence for political, ethnic or religious purposes and military acts against the armed forces of an enemy occupying the territory of one's homeland, legitimate combat intended to achieve sovereignty and independence.

Lebanon welcomes the idea of holding an international conference to reach a common definition of terrorism on the basis of these inalterable principles. We nevertheless reaffirm our right to resist Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa valley. We stand in opposition to the massacres perpetrated by the Israeli army in the villages of that region, most recently the Qana massacre.

We reiterate our support for all measures to combat terrorism, to implement all existing international agreements on this subject and to consolidate international cooperation in this area. In this regard, Lebanon stresses the importance of dealing with causes rather than merely condemning the effects or imposing sanctions.

Mr. Zhang Kening (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Before the General Assembly takes action on the draft resolution relating to the item entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", the Chinese delegation would like to state the following.

Before action was taken on the draft resolution relating to this item in the Sixth Committee during this session of the General Assembly, the Chinese delegation indicated that it would not be participating in the decision on the draft resolution and made a statement in this regard, explaining the position of the Chinese delegation and requesting that our statement be included in the records.

On the basis of the same reasons clearly expressed in that statement, the Chinese delegation will not be participating in the decision by the General Assembly on the draft resolution today and requests that this statement be included in the record.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/51/733.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/210).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Mekdad (Syria) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.6/51/L.15/Rev.1 in the light the following:

First, the reference to resolution 49/60 in the first preambular paragraph constitutes a reference to all the preambular and operative paragraphs of resolution 46/51 of 9 December 1991. Here we wish to recall in particular the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth preambular paragraphs of that resolution.

Secondly, the reference to the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, contained in resolution 50/6, in the second preambular paragraph of the resolution just adopted and in the third preambular paragraph of its annex, confirms the third subparagraph of the first part of the Declaration, which is entitled "Peace". That subparagraph reaffirms the right of self-determination of all peoples, taking into account the particular situation of peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, and recognizes the right of peoples to take legitimate action in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to realize their inalienable right of self-determination.

In this regard, we must affirm that the just struggle of peoples to end foreign occupation is a legitimate struggle and is not terrorism. This understanding was explained by the Chairman of the working group in his statement at the meeting in which the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations was adopted.

In its third preambular paragraph the resolution just adopted confirms the General Assembly's guidance by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As for the reference in the resolution to the numerous international and regional conferences, including those of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement, we understand this as an implicit endorsement of the communiqués of all those conferences, especially of the paragraphs on distinguishing terrorism from the just struggle of peoples for national liberation.

Hence, our decision to join consensus was based on our interest in achieving practical measures that will enable us to combat international terrorism, which we condemn in all its forms and manifestations, and on our belief in the need to combat that phenomenon in the light of the interest just mentioned.

My delegation had hoped that the resolution would have a separate paragraph containing a clear definition of international terrorism. The resolution also should have made the formulation of this definition a priority mission of the envisaged ad hoc committee, because such a definition will be necessary in preparing the text of the draft international conventions provided for in the resolution just adopted. In this respect, we reaffirm the need to establish a clear and unambiguous distinction between terrorism, which we condemn in all its forms and manifestations, and the struggle of peoples chafing under foreign occupation, who have the legitimate right to resist occupation and liberate their lands, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, its relevant resolutions and the norms of international law.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Given the unprecedented scale of terrorist acts in the recent past and the enormous human suffering they have caused, everyone will recognize the need for enhanced international cooperation to combat this scourge. While fully and unreservedly sharing this view, my delegation has consistently taken the position that measures to combat international terrorism must be in strict compliance with the existing principles and standards of international law, particularly in the field of human rights.

In past years, the different texts on the issue of terrorism that have been drafted within the United Nations have not always fulfilled this criterion. The Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly, upon recommendation by the Third Committee, have adopted resolutions containing the notion that terrorists violate human rights. Many delegations, including our own, have consistently expressed concern about this approach because it undermines the basic principle that the promotion and protection of human rights is the responsibility of States, while we acknowledge that the question of non-State actors requires increased, careful consideration.

Based on the same legal consideration, my delegation has reservations concerning the assertion expressed in the Declaration annexed to the resolution that all acts, methods and practices of terrorism are contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as well as concerning the not-very-clear concepts introduced in this connection into the Declaration. With

regard to the linkage made with the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, my delegation is grateful to the main sponsor of the Declaration for introducing paragraphs that make it clear that this Convention does not provide a basis for the protection of perpetrators of terrorist acts, and we would like to state our understanding that the Declaration does not affect the application of the provisions of the Convention, particularly the exclusion clauses and the provisions concerning the principle of non-refoulement.

Mr. Aquarone (Netherlands): The Netherlands has joined consensus regarding this resolution, which includes a Declaration to Supplement the 1994 Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism.

The Netherlands Government is fully committed to the fight against international terrorism. The continuous occurrence of acts of terrorism throughout the world indicates clearly that there is every reason to strengthen international cooperation in the struggle against such acts. The delegation of the Netherlands will cooperate and participate fully in any meaningful effort to suppress international terrorism.

We will continue to prosecute anyone — regardless of whether he or she is a refugee or an asylum seeker — who has engaged in or has been involved in acts of terrorism. We will do so to the full extent of our national law and in full respect of human rights. The Netherlands can subscribe fully to the contents of the statement just made by Liechtenstein in this respect.

We are of the opinion that the provisions of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees do not stand in the way of bringing perpetrators of acts of terrorism to justice. We therefore welcome the withdrawal of the explicit reference to article 1, paragraph F (c), of the Convention from the Declaration. The scope of this important article is thus not expanded. Indeed, this would have been quite unnecessary. The proper application of the existing Convention provisions, including articles 2, 32 and 33, warrant no change in the interpretation of article 1, paragraph F (c), of the Convention. We are grateful to the drafters of the resolution for accommodating this change.

The Netherlands would further like to stress that the Declaration does not affect in any way the protection afforded to refugees under the terms of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and other provisions of international law.

I would be most grateful if this statement could be placed officially on record.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 151?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Sixth Committee before it.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.